



# Elstree School

Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years  
Foundation Stage

## Accessibility Policy

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Person responsible for Policy: Bursar  
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Responsible Governor: Liz Shaw

Elstree School is a Company Limited by Guarantee No 690450 (England)

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## **1. Mission Statement**

We encourage all the children to make their best effort to reach a level they thought they could not reach. We hope they will achieve this through the honesty of their endeavor, the dedication and skill of the caring staff, the inspiring environment for learning and the excellence of the facilities. Their talents will be underpinned by fostering an understanding that communities thrive and flourish through respect, courtesy, honesty, loyalty and fairness. Our wish is for them all to seek to serve their community.

The aim of the School is to discover and then develop to the full, the natural ability that each child possesses, be it intellectual, cultural, athletic or social, thereby preparing them for their time at their next School and, of course, for later life.

It is our statutory duty to provide full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education Independent School Standards Regulations 2014, as well as section 94 of the Education Skills Act 2008 and EYFS Framework 2021), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. The pupils acquire speaking, listening, numeracy and literacy skills.

It is our belief that this aim will best be achieved if children are living, working and playing in an environment which is caring, energetic, well-ordered and guided by Christian principles. The curriculum, games, activities and general routine are arranged with this in view.

We encourage every child to take maximum advantage from caring staff, a beautiful setting and fine facilities. We hope every child will learn to communicate with confidence, both socially and publicly; we wish every child to be exposed to high standards of courtesy, honesty, loyalty and fairness.

Elstree comprises two sites within the same campus: the Prep and the Pre-Prep (including the EYFS). Whilst they are to some extent distinct and separate, every effort is made to create a whole school feel with both groups of children equally represented and nurtured. Further information on this can be found towards the end of this document in the section on the Pre-Prep.

This policy works in conjunction with our Pre-Prep Staff Handbook, Pre-Prep Parent Handbook and our Learning and Teaching Policy. Our curriculum does not discriminate against pupils contrary to the Equality Act, on the basis of protected characteristics which may include age, gender, disability, SEN, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, linguistic background, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

## **2. The Policy**

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' adverse effect on their normal day to day activities. Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice term 'is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes , 'long sensory impairments' such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises. This has some overlap with the Children and Families Act 2014.

### 3. Prospective Parents

All prospective parents are asked to complete a questionnaire prior to a pupil's arrival at school. In assessing a pupil's application, the school may take such advice and require such assessment that it regards necessary to make sure that the school can develop the pupil to the best of the pupil's ability. This applies to specific learning development areas as well as behavioural and physical needs.

### 4. The School

The heart of Elstree School is a Queen Anne / Georgian Manor House, once known as Woolhampton House, located in rural Berkshire. This, and many of the other school buildings, are old, listed and subject to extremely strict planning controls. For instance, the exterior and many of the internal features of the Main House are Grade II\* listed, while the Old Coach House and Home Farmhouse are both Grade II listed. The fact that the school is situated on the hills above the Kennet Valley adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in an area where new building is severely restricted by the Planning Department of West Berkshire Council, imposes significant restrictions upon development and change.

Like many schools, Elstree School has a policy of fixed classrooms and other academic areas, pupils moving to the teachers rather than vice versa, in order to provide more efficient teaching by having specialist subject facilities in one place. Therefore pupils have to move from the Main House to classrooms and from classroom to classroom, often upstairs and/or up or down steps, without the benefits of lifts.

Similar problems exist within the Main House which, due to its age, has external and internal steps and stairs but no lifts.

Pupils with impaired mobility are likely to be disadvantaged compared with their peers in these circumstances and may be prohibited altogether from accessing most academic and extracurricular facilities provided by the school.

Not all these matters can be overcome in any substantial way without making considerable alterations, planning permissions and listed building consent to buildings within the school at significant cost. Elstree School is not well-endowed and has no financial backing from any source other than pupil fees. Hence, budgetary constraints are considerable and even long-term plans for school development will only ameliorate the situation.

### 5. Policy Review

The School review of the Accessibility Policy is conducted by the Bursar. In keeping with its practices for all aspects of school life, the Bursar may co-opt others whose expertise may be of value and is also advised by the School Health and Safety Committee.

The Bursar's role with regard to the Accessibility Policy includes:

- a. reviewing school policies, procedures and facilities which affect prospective disabled applicants to the school,
- b. recommending ways in which accessibility to Elstree School's education can be achieved by making reasonable changes to the academic and extracurricular structure of the school and its planning for the future,
- c. **annually** reviewing the school's Accessibility Policy.

## 6. Admissions

The Senior Management Team (SMT) has reviewed the School's Admissions Policy and procedures (including access to scholarships and bursaries). The Medical form (to be treated as confidential if the applicant's parents or guardians require) allows parents to give the school details of the nature and effect of any known disability so as to enable it to consider any adjustments it might need to make.

## 7. Adjustments

The SMT will assess adjustments that can reasonably and practically be made by the School on a case by case basis. Each case will be treated individually and adjustments will be assessed as a result of the findings after staff assessments, discussions with parents and experience of the pupil within the School. Such adjustments may include the use of laptop computer by some SEN pupils and the use of voice projection equipment within the classroom. In particular, the awareness of all School staff is the key to assessing and implementing adjustments.

Conversely, due to the nature of the majority of the School buildings, as outlined above, some adjustments that may be considered by the SMT may not be possible on the grounds of impracticality or finance. For instance, lifts from the ground floor to the upper floors for access to the dormitories for a pupil with restricted mobility would not be possible not only on financial grounds but also due to planning restrictions on a Grade II\* listed building. It is noted that the dormitories are located on three different levels within the main house, each of which would have to have lift access. In addition, severely hearing impaired pupils may potentially be at risk in the dormitories as the fire alarm system does not incorporate a visual alarm. This adjustment may be precluded through cost implications of having to rewire a complete new fire alarm system throughout the dormitories although the School would consider any available technology as appropriate.

However, the School will not make any such decision in isolation and will complete a full access assessment in order to best understand the adjustments that it could make in order to support any existing, or potential pupil or staff member with a specific disability and the reasonableness of those adjustments.

## 8. Three Year Plan

**Proposed developments in physical access to education and associated services covering the period September 2022 to August 2025:**

<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Consider the feasibility of purchasing a portable or fixed induction loop for the main hall sound system.	By Sept 2023	Under review
Increase parking spaces, including for those with reduced mobility in the Pre-Prep car park	By Sept 2022	Completed
Upgrade of all outdoor signage to aid partially sighted persons.	By July 2023	Completed
Repaint Zebra crossing and speed humps in the main school vehicle entrance to allow greater visibility	By Mar 2022	Completed
<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Replacement of door from Long Room to terrace to make easier access for all persons in an emergency.	By June 2023	Under review

Consider installation of visual and audible intercom to the school to allow assistance to be summoned.	By Sept 2023	Under review
Consider installing a permanent ramp in addition to steps around the rose garden and by Hill Classroom Block.	By Sept 2023	Under review
Consider use of vibrating pillows for children with hearing impairments to alert them to a fire alarm (In the boarding house)	By Sept 2024	As needed
<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Consider installing a ramp to access the back of the McMullen Hall and Music rooms	By Sept 2024	Under review
Consider installing a ramp to access the Terrace	By Sept 2024	Under review

**Making written information accessible in a range of different ways for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:**

<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Use of different colour paper, transparent overlays & line guides for children with learning support requirements	By Sep 2022	Completed
Introduction of Microsoft surfaces to years 6-8, to allow pupils to access to audio files and other forms of software	By Sep 2022	Completed
Increase the range and quantity of audio books available to pupils in the school library.	By Sept 2022	Ongoing
Purchase one of more 'C-pens' which will enable LDD pupils to access written information more easily.	By Sept 2022	Completed
<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Consider the purchase of handheld electronic magnifiers to enlarge print size for children with visual impairments	By Sep 2024	Under review
Purchase Keyboards and calculators with enlarged letters and numbers	By Sep 2024	Under review
<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Purchase of visual aids in the event of visually impaired student/s.	By Sep 2025	Under review
Review screen size for all teaching staff and consider swapping small screens for larger ones or adding a second screen for further enlargement	By Sep 2025	Under review

**The extent to which disabled pupils (including those with learning development needs) can participate in the whole curriculum:**

<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the need for all pupils	By Sept. 22	Ongoing
Re appointment of school counsellor to support the mental wellbeing of the whole school community	By Sept 22	Completed
Provide whole teaching staff inset training for hearing impaired children.	By Sept. 23	Under review
Provide whole teaching staff inset training for meeting the needs of ADHD children.	By Sept. 22 By Jan 23	Completed Scheduled
Consider sound system (radio microphones) to help in larger classrooms for those who might have impaired hearing.	Sept. 2022	Completed
Investigate a speech recognition programme more widely available throughout the school (dragon speak).	April 2023	Under review
<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Touch typing to be included throughout the school from Year 3. Continue to research and provide programmes for use at home, allow time in school day for pupils to use the touch typing programmes. Continue extracurricular club.	By Sept 2023	Ongoing
As technology advances to be aware of new voice activated software. There are many devices used throughout the school and the availability	By Sept 2023	Under review

of voice-activated programmes has increased. Staff and pupils require training to fully use the facility.		
<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>Action/Date</b>	<b>Re-assess</b>
Purchase of adjustable work stations for Art & DT	By Sept 2025	Under review
Consider installation of a mechanical hoist to enable disabled children to access the swimming pool	By Sept 2025	Under review

## 9. Physical Lay-Out of the School and its Facilities

The SMT has considered reviewed the physical site layout and has identified a few certain challenges:

### A. Main House (Grade II\* listed inside and out)

- The Front Door access is up / down steps which are listed. It is likely that the listed status would prevent the construction of a ramp. Such a ramp would interfere with vehicular traffic
- The Masters' Door access is up / down one step but this could be overcome with a ramp
- McMullen Hall Corridor Door access is up / down one step and a portable ramp is stored nearby.
- Boot Room Door access is up / down one step but this could be overcome with a ramp
- Dining Room fire exits down one step and a portable ramp is stored nearby.
- Fire exits from the cellars could be problematical for mobility impaired pupils
- Width of doors into lavatories
- Dormitories are all located on three differing levels on upper floors. No lifts are in place or are possible.
- No visual fire alarm for severely hearing impaired boarders
- All Fire Escapes from the upper floors of the Main Building are stairs and therefore inaccessible to mobility restricted pupils.
- Doors into some dormitories may preclude access for mobility restricted pupils
- The width of some passageways, particularly the main passage with the notice boards and the area at the bottom of the Back Stairs, would cause problems for mobility restricted pupils.
- Bathroom and lavatory areas have steps and narrow door access
- All showers have either steps up or down for access

### B. The Classrooms and Access Thereto (including the Ancient Classrooms, Old Classrooms, the Hill Classrooms, the Cooper Classrooms, the Art Room, the Music School, the Sunley Rooms, the Science Centre, the Design Technology (DT) School and the three blocks at the Pre-Prep)

- Access to the Ancient Classrooms is via steps but this could be overcome by ramps for main access and fire exits.
- Access to the DT Classroom is via steps but this could be overcome with a ramp
- Access to the Ancient Classrooms and DT area is restricted by steps through the arch on the corner of the McMullen Hall and these could not be overcome with ramps. Alternatively, access could be from the Lodge entrance but this is impractical for pupil safety reasons (vehicle access area). The only accessible route for mobility impaired pupils would be from the McMullen Hall Corridor.
- The Art Room and the Music School are accessed up steps from the Boot Room area but a ramp in this area might be possible if pupil safety can be assured. The fire exit from the Art Room is via steps and these could not be overcome with a ramp due to interference with vehicles and space limitations.
- The Learning Support Department is located in The Sunley Rooms. This area is accessible down steep steps and would not be accessible to mobility impaired pupils.

- The only access to the Old Classrooms, the Hill Classrooms and The Sunley Rooms is through the Back Garden which contains five sets of steps (three flights of eight steps, one of seven and one of five). These are ornamental stone steps that form part of the listing of the Main House. Ramps cannot be constructed without major reconstruction work to the gardens as there is insufficient space as currently laid out.
- Access from the back garden into the Old and New Classrooms and the Science School is via steps up and down. Space restrictions are such that ramps would be extremely difficult to construct, particularly to the Science School where major reconstruction would be required. There is a ramp into the Cooper Classroom block together with a lift to the upper floors.
- The Cooper Classrooms can be accessed from the rear down a sloping path.
- The Science Centre contains two laboratories and two classrooms for teaching along with changing facilities for pupils in years 3 and 4. This building is accessible by steps in the front but from a slope in the rear so would be accessible for anyone who is mobility impaired. There is a shower and lavatory with disabled access.
- There are no visual fire alarms in any of the academic areas, apart from the Cooper Classrooms, so severely hearing impaired pupils could be at risk.
- The Pre-Prep Classrooms are accessed in three buildings by steps or a steep ramp which is out of specification for mobility impaired ramp access. The upstairs classrooms would not be accessible and the fire escape is only accessed down stairs and into another room.

### **C. Sport and Recreation**

The level of use of the School's sporting facilities will depend largely upon the type and degree of the disability.

- Sports Hall. Clear access through all doors. Lift to balcony. Disabled toilets and showers in both boys' and girls' changing rooms
- Swimming Pool. Poor access to the swimming pool area with steep steps and no alternative route. Steps up to the pool area itself. There is no ramp and there is insufficient space for such an adjustment. Sight and hearing impaired children have access but Staff in charge of safety and the conduct of swimming will have to ensure that they are aware of special requirements such as hand signals etc.
- Squash Court. Poor access through swimming pool gate.
- Playing Fields. Easy access to all areas along tarmac paths or across grass. For personal safety, sight impaired children could need assistance.
- Adventure Playground. Good access down back drive or over grass. Play area supervised when in use.
- All Weather Pitch by Sports Hall. Easy access via tarmac paths and wide gates
- Bates All Weather Pitch. Easy access via tarmac paths and wide gates.
- Cricket Nets. Easy access over grass. Use by visually impaired pupils would need careful supervision.

## **10. Welfare**

The majority of the welfare aspects of this policy are covered in the detail above. However, the School is acutely aware that some pupils may suffer from various medical conditions that could impinge on their ability to partake in School activities. All such cases are dealt with on a case by case basis following discussions with all interested parties, particularly the parents.

## **11. After School Clubs and Holiday Sports Camps**

These activities tend to be sport orientated and the facilities used are those that are available during the school term. The points above would be relevant and each child's requirements would have to be assessed prior to an activity taking place. If possible, some adjustments such as a change in location may be possible to enable children with disabilities to take part. However, any such adjustment should not jeopardise the success or safety of the activity taking place.

## **12. Academic Accessibility**

The School makes every effort to implement reasonable changes to its whole school curriculum in order to accommodate pupils with disability as long as such adjustments do not impact on the learning and progress of other pupils.

- In cases of hearing difficulties, teachers will adopt appropriate behaviour when dealing with the child. Depending upon the severity of the condition, this may involve looking directly at the child whilst speaking using a microphone linked to the child's existing hearing aid, sitting the child near or at the front of the class or closing doors and windows to eliminate extraneous noise.
- Where a child is visually impaired, teachers are aware of the need of the child to wear glasses, to sit near the front of the class, to have photocopies / book / general resources made available in large print.
- Parents of children with behavioural and emotional special needs that are deemed to be too severe for entry to the school, will be advised by the Headmaster at the interview stage of the enrolment process (see Admissions Policy).

Communication between parents and School staff is such that the School is generally aware, before a child enters the School, of any problems that may potentially impede a child's progress or which may hinder the progress of other children. Should a child need a TA permanently to help them access the curriculum, then this can be considered on a case by case basis.

## **13. Learning Difficulties and Disabilities LDD**

For children with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD), Learning Support is on hand to guide teaching staff and to support the child's learning on a 1:1 basis. Children are screened on entry, no matter what their age, for signs of dyslexia or dyspraxia or any other mild learning difficulty. If they require learning support, their parents are advised and lessons can be arranged. Children who have Learning Support are withdrawn from lessons at convenient times and are taught by a team of staff all of whom have Special Needs qualifications (see Admissions Policy for additional detail).

On occasions, support may be brought in from outside. This may be in the form of a specialist in the particular disability coming to advise teaching staff on strategies for dealing with a certain child's problem, or it may mean that a specialist visits the school on occasions to help the child in situ.

## **14. Equal Opportunities**

All pupils have equal opportunities across the curriculum and sporting provision. Lessons are differentiated to allow for differing abilities. Games are differentiated to allow for differing levels of ability and extra-curricular activities take into account the fact that every pupil is different and some have specific learning needs. No child is excluded from an activity on the basis of a disability.



## **15. Awareness and Observance of the Policy**

The Committee has considered the existing machinery in the school for ensuring awareness and observance of the policy:

- The Policy is reviewed annually by the Bursar.
- The Admissions Policy is to be reviewed annually, concurrently with the review of this Policy
- A copy of this Policy is in the Policy File on the school intranet.
- The monitoring of this Policy is the responsibility of the Bursar
- The Governors are fully apprised of the existence of this Policy and of any changes that are made to its content. They are also kept informed of its monitoring.
- Parents are aware at all times that staff follow this Policy and that their child is not being discriminated against on the basis of a disability.
- This policy sits in conjunction with the Risk assessment policy, Health and Safety policy, Equality policy and Access to school premises policy.